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# The Psychology of Medieval Persecution

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# The Psychology of Medieval Persecution

ERNEST R. HULL, S.J.

*From the "Bombay Examiner"*

AMONG our many proposed-but-never-executed essays, one was the series called "The Dynamics of History, Human and Divine," which was intended to dive deeply into the philosophy of history viewed in its religious aspect. The other was an essay entitled "Retrospective Binoculars; an Instrument for seeing the Past through the Eyes of the Past." The first-mentioned essay was intended to portray on the one hand the psychology of human nature, and on the other hand the Divine policy of dealing with that psychology. The second essay would have been merely an application to history of the conclusions reached in the first, in order to avoid those one-sided and inadequate judgments which are inseparable from trying to interpret the past according to the canons and standards of the present. In handling this vast and profound theme we cannot claim to do justice to it now; and what we shall put down here will be merely a desultory cluster of suggestions.

First comes the axiom that if ever we want to judge soundly of any period of human history, we must always judge it *in the light of human nature*; first in general, and next in accordance with that particular phase of psychology which was prevalent at the time under review. On this subject G. K. Chesterton, in an article

on "Human Nature and the Historians," wrote recently in the *Catholic World* as follows:

"The doctrine of the brotherhood of men has been made the subject of some silly rhetoric, and of much quite stupid attack, but it remains the only solid basis for any kind of thinking about mankind. If men are not brothers, they are not men. I am not concerned here, however, with the place of this idea in philosophy or religion, but with its practical application to the study of the human story. I wish only to draw attention to the idea of human fraternity as a tool or test for historical inquiry. For the purposes of the present discussion the meaning of the doctrine of human brotherhood may perhaps be stated in this way. Human brotherhood means that in considering the ways of any tribe or nation, however remote or however degraded, we need not use or do not use the mere method of zoology; we do not need to study them as we study ants and earwigs. We can make the most elaborate calculations of what an earwig does. But we cannot in our wildest visions form any conception of what an earwig would do; we suffer under the limitation of not being earwigs. But if we see a man doing anything we are enlightened from within as well as from without. We know something at least of what he will do even before he does it. This sympathetic knowledge is crossed and confused, of course, by innumerable differences of convention, of symbolism, and of special type; but the point here is that, as far as it comes in at all, it is a different kind of knowledge that the naturalist can have about an earwig or about anything else. As long as the facts are fixed and proved about either creature there is, of course, nothing more to be said. But if a question arose between two explanations,

it might, in the case of the earwig, have to remain a question. But in the case of a man we might begin to talk, out of the knowledge in our own hearts, about the more *probable* explanation.

"But though we know that in human history there are undecipherable things, and especially horrible things that are only half-decipherable, we who believe in a human brotherhood, a permanent human basis, regard such dark things with sentiments very different to the cold curiosity and disdain of the modern scientific inquirer. We have a more fearful sense as we look up at those towering engines of evil. To us they are not the wreck of a lost creation; they are the wild end of ways we have ourselves trodden, the public and uplifted punishment of crimes we have ourselves come too near. There has been such a thing as slavery, the desperate social expedient by which men solved the sickening social problems, not indeed by feeling, but certainly by blasphemously and abominably *saying* that a man could be a 'chattel.' There has been such a thing as aristocracy, and in England, at least, it is growing rather than decreasing. There has been such a thing as a theoretical division of a man from men. There has been such a thing as human sacrifice, such a thing as cannibalism; dreadful religious service where live men offered a dead man to the gods, horrible moonless feasts where man fed upon a flesh like his own. There have been, in short, shining and high places of horror, cruelties incredible and indecencies which might make the sun drop from heaven. But while the modern pedant looks at these heathen heights from a greater height of superciliousness, as things he has passed forever, *we* have very different feelings. We can only cry that we know not the depths

of our own darkness, and pray that we be not led into temptation, but may find deliverance from evil."

That is the first key to the sound interpretation of past human history. To put it briefly, we must assume the attitude not of the Pharisee but of the Publican. Confronted with the scandals around them, it was a common reflection of the Saints to say: "If I were in that man's place, God alone knows whether I should not act just as badly as he has done." The same sentiment, applied to the scandals of the past, naturally leads to the reflection: "If I had been born in those circumstances, what reason have I for thinking that I should have done better?"

Human nature is an entity made up of imperfections and limitations, of passions, of impulses which tend to certain results, of which a shrewd forecast is fairly possible. And if our mode of conduct today is markedly superior to the conduct of a certain section of humanity in some remote age, this is presumably due to the fact that human nature is now dominated by a different set of ideas from those which dominated human nature then; and the difference of results is due for the most part to the difference of the two dominations. If in some respects I in the twentieth century am better than my medieval brother I may fairly ask: How much of it is due to my own superior initiative, and how much is due to the difference of environment?

Again we must attend to the complementary aspects of the difference. Thus humanity in the past did certain things which fill us with horror. But on the other hand we are doing things now which would have filled humanity in the past with equal horror. If to us *medieval intolerance* causes creeps down the back, surely

the *tolerance* of modern times, with the indifferentism inseparably bound up with it, would also have caused creeps down the back of the medieval. The notion that the existence of God, the truth of Christianity and the teaching authority of the Church should be a matter of hesitation or doubt, would have made any average medieval turn in his grave. To him these truths were as clear as the sun at noonday; so much so that any man who called them into question must be either hopelessly insane or hopelessly wicked.

Between these two alternatives, moreover, there was little room for choice. Nowadays we are so impressed with the idea of hereditary propensities, of compulsory ideas and irresistible impulses, that we are always trying to explain away crime as something for which the criminal is not responsible. That is perhaps a natural tendency in an age of neurasthenia and of weakened convictions as to the reality of free-will and moral responsibility. But no such notion could occur to the robust human nature of the Middle Ages. Then, as now, men were always doing the things they ought not to do, and leaving undone the things they ought to do; and this was so ordinary a state of affairs that no one was surprised at it. But at the same time every man was supposed to know what he was doing, and to have the power of not doing it if he liked; and so he was ruthlessly held responsible for his actions. Above all, when the medieval man saw one of his fellows broaching heresy, the very strength and clarity of his religious convictions made it impossible for him to credit the heretic with good faith. His defection was due either to pride, or passion, or the shirking of things he did not like. He was unquestionably a wicked man, and had to be treated as such.



It is true that if he kept his errors to himself he might pass unscathed. But if he began to air his views and spread them among his neighbors, he stood exactly on a par with the man who, addicted to unnatural vices, endeavors to corrupt the innocent and weak, and draw them down into the bottomless pit with himself. Even in modern times the practiser of unnatural vices and the corruptor of the innocent is regarded both ethically and legally as a pernicious criminal who must be coerced. But to the medieval mind the rectitude of faith and religion was if anything even more important than rectitude of morals, just because religion and faith were the foundations on which morality rested. Hence the avowed and aggressive heretic was regarded as no less dangerous to the community in general than the avowed and aggressive libertine. Therefore he must be handled drastically, and this for two reasons:

*First for his own sake.* It was hoped that severe punishment would bring him to a better mind, and end in repentance and conversion. Failing this, they naïvely argued, it is better for him to burn for a time in this world than to burn forever in the next. It is well known that the clergy did try to win over the condemned to repentance before the sentence was put into execution—in which case he could be reprieved, and admitted to penance; and even at the stake similar efforts at conversion were sustained, which, if successful, led to a commutation of the death sentence.

*Secondly for the sake of others:* to deter them from following so bad an example, and also to deprive the criminal of the power of spreading his mischief.

If we were transported back to those ages, and our mentality transformed into the mentality of the same

period, do you not think that we should have conducted ourselves in the same way? According to the laws of human psychology it seems to me a foregone conclusion that we should.

From the fact, we must next try to push back to the cause of the fact. The persecution policy of the Middle Ages was a spontaneous outcome of human nature and human psychology in its then prevalent phase. What the Church had to do with it we shall study closely later on. But at present there is no need to bring in the Church as a cause, seeing that everything can be explained on these inherently human lines without looking for any extrinsic cause at all. And moreover, the action of the Church was itself part of the same all-permeating psychology. A strong conviction of a truth, or what is conceived as a truth, psychologically carries with it an intolerance of the opposite error; and in an age of strong convictions in all matters, secular as well as religious, the same intolerance will show itself in the religious domain as shows itself in every other domain. Kings and princes had strong views about their rights, and an equally strong reliance on might to enforce those rights. If a chief thought he had a title of inheritance, he was not content to see himself deprived of it by a rival claimant. He simply fought for his claim and won it or lost it by force or failure of force. If landlords had a will to domineer over their serfs or tenants they did so. If it was deemed desirable to stamp anything out, it was stamped out; if deemed desirable to force something in, it was forced in without mercy. There was no delicate consideration of other people's ideas or feelings. Men looked at things in lumps, and acted accordingly in the lump. If persuasion was tried, no one was content to let the

cause stand or fall by persuasion; that failing, force was the obvious alternative. Hence the woful spectacle of kings and princes, chiefs and people continually at war. The game of life was to outdo each other, and worst each other, and gain the victory over each other. Bullying and brutality were in the blood. It was an inheritance of corrupt human nature from a pagan past, so far uneradicated, and hardly even mitigated by the influence of Christianity.

In one way the savage is much akin to the child; a pure creature of impulse, making straight towards the things it likes and straight away from the things it dislikes. But the savage, being an adult, possesses strength and determination of which the child is incapable. That self-assertion which in the boy becomes the spirit of bullying in small things, becomes in the adult a spirit of drastic insistance and coercion in bigger things which translated itself into action in the Middle Ages when might spelt right and the strong trampled on the weak. Kings in this spirit went out forestalling each other without the least scruple, saying to themselves: "If I don't take my chance against him today, he will take his chance against me tomorrow."

This being the general psychology of the barbarian mind of the dark ages in matters of secular import, it follows as a matter of course that the same psychology should assert itself when religious matters came on the tapis. There was no fine analysis of principles. People who got attached to Christianity, and felt zeal for it, were sure to resent any attempt to outrage its tenets. So far as there was any zeal, so far was it fringed with intolerance. Hence it was that so many tragic cases occurred in the eleventh and twelfth centuries of single

heretics or small groups of them being seized by the mob and burnt at the stake, quite independent of the civil or religious authority. It was a counterpart of lynch law in the United States, where the people, out of a sense of indignation against crime combined with race-hatred, seize hold of negroes and tear them limb from limb, or tar and feather them, or even burn them to ashes. The persecutions conducted by the medievals arose from the same motives of indignation against any man who dared to set himself up against the established order of things, with the redeeming motive of trying to save the simple and the innocent from being corrupted by heretical teaching. The habitual psychology of those robust ages caused men instinctively to take a high hand in dealing with things and people they did not like; while the rudeness and hardness of the age prevented them from asking how they would like to be treated that way themselves. They could not abide heresy. They wanted to get it out of the place. And having the power to assert themselves, they made straight for their objective in the most ruthless and effectual way possible. So much so that when confiscation and exile did not seem satisfying enough, they resorted to torture and the stake as the simplest and most direct way of disposing of the affair. In this way they consistently applied to religious matters the same methods which they applied habitually to all other matters.

That human psychology is sufficient to explain the ruthless methods of suppressing heresy in the Middle Ages, without the least need to call in the Church as an explanatory cause, is seen from the fact that Protestants, as soon as they came into power, proceeded at once to treat their opponents in the same way. The spirit and

method of persecution was practically the same in both cases, reflecting the same barbarism and the same self-assertion. But in one respect there was a difference. If the Catholic persecution of heretics is condemned as inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel, on the other hand there was a certain logic in it. For heresy to the Catholic was objectively at least a revolt against the revelation of Christ as authoritatively and unquestionably made known through the Church; and what was objectively a crime could consistently be treated as a crime, and punished accordingly. But the Protestant could claim no such support of logic. If the Bible as interpreted by the individual was the sole rule of faith there could be no such thing as heresy, since each man's mind, being a law to itself, owed responsibility to God alone. Hence arose an additional element of faulty logic in Protestant persecutions from which Catholic persecutions were free. The glaring inconsistency of one Protestant burning another because he interpreted the Bible in a different sense, only brings out more emphatically the point at issue, viz., that the persecution policy, both of Catholics and Protestants, is to be explained solely and simply by the particular phase of human psychology which prevailed in the Middle Ages, and which continued to survive during and after the Reformation. And just as it is not necessary to enlist Protestantism as a theological system to explain why Protestants went in for persecution, so it is not necessary to enlist Catholicism as a system in order to explain why Catholics went in for persecution. Human psychology is in itself the explanation which explains. The same spirit of self-assertion and ruthless pursuit of desired ends which was an unmitigated vice in the secular domain,

became, to put it euphemistically, a *defect incidental to a virtue* when it came to religious matters. Where religion was not valued, heretics were left alone, even though they were doing untold mischief among the Faithful. But where religion was valued, zeal for it ran beyond discretion and lapsed into fanaticism issuing in persecution—in which we can assume that people meant well all the time they were doing badly.

Mind, we do not commit ourselves to the view that *all* prosecution of heretics in the Middle Ages was wrong. What we say is that even where it was wrong, it has its psychological explanation, that is all.

Supposing for the present for argument's sake that the policy of coercion and the severe handling of heretics in the Middle Ages was inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel and contrary to the sound principles of Catholic ethics, a matter which shall be analyzed later, the question arises: "How is it that this inconsistency should not have been manifest even to the meanest Christian intelligence in those days; and secondly: How is it that the Official Church, supposed at least to be fully enlightened, not only did not utter a strong protest against such misconduct, but even lent itself to the objectionable policy; nay, went further, and strenuously enforced it?"

The question is both fair and relevant; but for clearness of handling we must divide it into two parts. First we must take the general body of Christians, both princes and people—including the rank and file of the clergy and even bishops so far as they come in locally; and then we can take separately the action of the Official Church as represented by the Popes and General Councils. In the former case we have to fall back on general human

psychology as before; in the second we shall have to face up directly to the question of abstract principles, and the responsibility of their application by the Church as such.

Looking upon the persecution policy as a spontaneous outcome of human psychology, quite apart from the official action of the Church, we have to realize the extremely crude state of the Christian mentality of the time as manifested in the general life of the lay community, from which kings and princes and a certain moiety of the local bishops and clergy were not exempted; in which situation the comparative recentness of conversion to Christianity and the incompleteness of that conversion was an all-important factor.

There have always been three grades in the process of christianizing a people. The first, a simple acceptance of Christianity as a profession, and the life of worship and ceremonial provided thereby. Then secondly, the assimilation of doctrines and principles, so that people begin by habit to regard Christian teaching as good and true. Thirdly, the gradual reduction of principles to practice in daily life. This stage is the last to arrive, and the slowest in achievement. First comes an acknowledgment of the principles as a right and proper ideal; but which are only put into practice so far as they come easy, and so far as selfish interest or the impulse of passion does not stand in the way. Then follows the stage of repentance for misdeeds; an acknowledgment of sin after the sin has been committed. Then, very gradually, the surrender of self to the full force of the principles, and the acquisition of restraint even under temptation.

The process, moreover, differs in its rate of progress

in different individuals. There were in the Middle Ages, among even the most barbarian peoples "*animæ naturaliter Christianæ*," souls with Christian instincts ready-made, who only needed the truth to be presented, and they would embrace it fully both in theory and practice; and out of these came the Saints and really holy and solid Christians of the period. Others were in a middle state, not ready-made but makable; and these gradually got leavened with the Christian ideal. But the great masses of men, high and low, were difficult material. Corrupt human nature held supremacy among them, and had gradually to be reformed; partly by direct appeals, but still more by the slow formation of a Christian atmosphere and public opinion, to which they succumbed by contagion, so to speak, by a gradual realization that their ethical standards were out of joint with the times, and that they must adapt themselves to environment or else be left in isolated reprobation by their fellow-men.

This process was going on throughout the dark and Middle Ages, among nations whose conversion, even nominally, was quite recent. The Gallic peoples were still neophytes in the time of Charlemagne, while the Germanic were still neophytes in the thirteenth century when the persecution policy developed. Hence it is little, not much, that we should expect from them as regards grasp of the spirit of the Gospel and the ethical principles of Christianity. People who expect that a converted country should at once blossom out into a full-blown perfection, or that the Church should be able to cause whole nations immediately to put on Christ in His fulness, lose sight of the very important truth embodied in the parable of the wheat and the cockle, that



*the Church is not a society of the élite but a school of the imperfect.* Oblivion of this maxim lies at the root of the sense of shock experienced by the modern mind when confronted with the scandals of the past.

On this subject we wrote thirteen years ago, in our essay on "Theology and Christianity," as follows:

"As Father Joseph Rickaby somewhere shrewdly observes, the Catholic Church suffers the disadvantages of having a history. A Divine institution, were it purely such, ought to have a spotless record. But a Divine institution worked by human instrumentality, not so. Wherever the human spirit is introduced, there imperfection sets in. Now the Church is Divine in its institution but human in its instrumentality; and history, which perpetuates the faults of men more than their virtues, will naturally accumulate a record full of defects. To attribute these defects to the Church, when they are the product of the imperfect human spirit in the Church, is obviously unfair. But this only by the way. What we are coming to is this. It is all very well for the Theosophist to make invidious comparisons; but the terms are unequal. The Church is not a select society of the perfect. It is not a club for the aggregation of the *élite* of humanity. It is essentially a training school for mankind, a school for raising imperfect men towards perfection. Christianity takes in the raw material of humanity and works upon it, getting as much as can be got, and counting as a success any amelioration, however small, it is able to effect. The history of the Church is a history of the struggle between the archaic depravity of unrestrained humanity and the elevating principles of the Gospel. Christianity had to do what civilization, what culture, what refinement, what philosophy had

failed to achieve. Read in the pagan authors of Greece and Rome the stark and gruesome refinement of viciousness, which, in spite of Plato and Socrates and Aristotle and the Stoics, had supervened upon the literary and artistic culture of the World-Empire. Then contemplate the wild savagery of the northern barbarian whose work was to reduce this decadent and degraded civilization to a wreck. Lastly, join together these effete remnants of degraded culture and these brutal elements of Gothic savagery, and consider the blend which would result from their combination; and then you will have before you the material on which Christianity had to work.

"And how did the work progress? In the case of many individuals, even in the most savage periods, the struggle was short and the triumph complete. These we call the Saints. In others we find strong but wild natures half-redeemed from their wildness; in others again a compound of strong faith and weak practice. In the masses of mankind the result varied from above mediocrity to almost nil. And this stupendous work of bettering savage humanity went on, with varying success, through the agency of a clergy selected out of the very people who were to be ameliorated. What wonder is it, then, if the clergy themselves often reflected their own circumstances and origin, or if they often enough stood in need of amelioration too? In such a state of things who can reasonably look for the immediate realization of a high ideal in large masses of men? If the Church were a select society of the perfect; if no one were accepted to the Christian profession but those who had already attained Christianity's goal—then indeed Christian history would have retained a spotless record, and represented the *élite* of mankind. But what about the masses

of degraded humanity? No! the Church from the beginning was a school for the imperfect, a net sweeping the world, enclosing all, however faulty, who showed the least disposition to learn, and prepared to give the full credit of membership to those who aspired, nay, even to those who might be hoped to aspire—just because the work of Christianity was not to segregate the just but to bring sinners to repentance.

“And if, in the records of the past, the successes are modestly written and mostly unnoticed, the failures blazoned large and clear, it is only an illustration of the disadvantage of having a history when, as we see, the point of that history is missed, and Christianity is accused of embodying an imperfect ideal—just, forsooth, because its ideals have not been realized in a manner commensurate with the number of its professing members.”

This, too, is the explanation, applicable to all ages, of the discrepancy which so often exists between principle and practice in the history of the Church. Taking the widest possible ground, inconsistency between principle and practice is inseparable from human nature. Putting aside highly exceptional individuals, there is hardly a man who is free from this defect in some way or other; and the inconsistency becomes most frequent where the principles in question are lofty ones, or their application is difficult, or goes against the grain of human inclination. The non-practising or half-practising Catholic is a familiar enough example to dispense us from elaboration of the point; and the example is always the more striking in proportion to the education of the individual, his power of grasping principles and the sense of mastery over his own actions. But when we go back to crude,

archaic and newly converted peoples, in an age when education was the privilege of the very few, and when the inveterate viciousness of unrestrained pagan nature had hardly come to feel the beginnings of restraint, a marked discrepancy between the ethical code and spirit of Christianity and the general tenor of men's life and action ought not to evoke the least surprise, or cause the slightest scandal, so obvious a corollary of the general situation does it appear.

All that we have said tends to promote comprehensiveness of view and the sense of proportion. It comes back to what Chesterton says about judging a particular history in the light of human nature in general. If the Catholics of the Middle Ages were drastic and cruel in their treatment of heretics, it is fair to look round for any other section of humanity which has not been equally drastic and cruel to those who similarly opposed them. If a Catholic apologist turns to his Protestant assailant and asks him: "Why do you denounce *our* Inquisition when you are responsible for Inquisitions of your own?" the *argumentum ad hominem* is generally ruled out of court by saying that "Two blacks do not make a white." To this we always feel tempted to reply: True, two blacks do not make a white; but it makes a great difference to the case when we know there *are* two blacks, and not only one. It is not a question of mere controversial fencing, but a collation of human experience. When side by side with the violences of Catholics against heretics we place the violences of heretics against Catholics; when we set over against the cruelties of Queen Mary the far greater cruelties of Henry VIII and Elizabeth; when we recall the outrageous brutality with which Catholic Ireland was treated for more than three cen-

turies, or enumerate the atrocities of the French Revolution, or, to bring in a current instance, the savageries of Carranza in Mexico, about which the non-Catholic press remains so discreetly silent, this is not merely with the object of throwing off criticism from ourselves by heaping criticism on others. It is something far deeper, a plunge into the very depths of human psychology. The object is not to condone on either side the wrongs committed, but to view the whole matter comprehensively in the light of human nature, thus assigning the evil to a common cause.

The parallel moreover is quite complete. The atrocities perpetrated by Protestants, liberals, radicals and progressivists against the Catholic Church times out of number were not merely explosions of popular lawlessness. They were in every case the deliberate policy of the leading spirits of their respective times; the Protestant Reformers and their successors both in Church and State, the French Encyclopedists and leaders of revolt, etc., deliberately formulating policies and putting them into methodic execution—sometimes out of zeal for their own religion, sometimes out of hatred of another religion, sometimes out of detestation of all religion, sometimes, more inconsistently still, in the name of *liberty, equality and fraternity* or *the rights of man*, sometimes out of mere ambition for power, sometimes out of anarchistical frenzy. One great lesson emerges from the *melee*; and it is *the innate savagery of man as soon as you get beneath the veneer of civilization with which convention has clothed him as with a skin*. We see the utter hollowness of the shibboleths of liberty, progress and enlightenment by which they try to give respectability to their outrages, while all the time their real stimulation

comes from the abysmal depths of the man's animal nature. It is what the evolutionist calls the *ape and tiger*, which after thousands of years of attempted reclamation has not yet died, but still lives below the surface, ready, like a monstrous Jack-in-the-box, to rise up erect and active as soon as power and opportunity release the spring.

"Intolerance," writes Vacandard, "is natural to man. If as a matter of fact men are not always intolerant in practice, it is only because they are prevented by conditions born of reason and wisdom. Respect for the opinion of others supposes a temper of mind which takes years to acquire. It is a question whether the average man is capable of it." That modern education has not eliminated this natural propensity is obvious in every-day experience. Intolerance is just as much a characteristic of the modern scientific mind as it was of the ancient theological mind. A curious instance culled from a current magazine well illustrates this point. It is an anecdote told by Mivart about Huxley:

"I began to speak about toleration, for which I have, and always had what is perhaps a weakness. Turning to Huxley for support he astonished me by saying: 'Oh! you must not appeal to me to support toleration as a principle.' 'Indeed?' I said. 'No,' he continued, 'I think vice and error ought to be extirpated by force if it could be done.' 'You amaze me,' I rejoined; 'then you rehabilitate Torquemada and some others we have all been accustomed to blame.' 'I think,' he answered, 'they were quite right in principle, though the way they carried the principle out was injurious to their cause.' 'Surely,' I said, 'burning alive was a strong measure!' 'Yes,' said he, 'especially the smell!' At this we all laughed, and

the subject dropped." (*Nineteenth Century*, Dec. 1897, p. 995.)

But mind carefully, we are not putting forth this consideration as a piece of apologetic. We do not mean thereby to say: "Medieval Catholics were not worse than other people, including Renaissance Protestants and modern progressivists, and therefore the Inquisition is not to be criticized or censured." No such thing! Medieval Catholics had at their back the advantage of Catholic Christianity; a far more humanizing and redeeming influence, looked at in itself, than either Protestantism or modern liberalism. Possessing the advantage of this influence, they ought, in theory at least, to have done better; not as badly or worse than the rest of humanity. Therefore with our whole heart and soul we join in the vote of censure passed against the medieval persecutors precisely so far as they failed to respond to the ideals which their religion placed before them. But when we go further and weigh the modern indictment against them, we find cropping up quite a large number of considerations which in great degree serve to mitigate our sentence and to extenuate our blame. The medievals, we soon find out, had excuses for their severity which neither Protestants nor modern liberals can allege in their defense. And since it is the part of every fair-minded judge to take extenuating circumstances into account, we feel that it is not a matter of partisanship or special pleading to show what the extenuating circumstances of the case really were; not in order to disarm all criticism or to cancel all blame, but at least to modify that criticism and moderate that blame. It is one thing (and a wrong thing) to try to justify a policy which we now see to be in many respects *objectively* wrong; and

quite another to show the reasons why men in those days were *subjectively* convinced that their policy was right. It is part of fidelity to legal principles for a judge to regard assault as a crime; but it is also part of equity and fair-play to recognize that a particular assault was highly provoked, and to mitigate the sentence accordingly.

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The morality is of the purely natural kind, but for simplicity, ease and humor, the style has seldom been surpassed; the epic of the fireside, with an appeal to some of the tenderest emotions.

### Hale, Edward Everett:

The Man Without a Country....Little, Brown, \$1.25

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The Cardinal's Snuff-Box.....Lane, \$1.50

The Lady Paramount ..... " \$1.50

My Friend Prospero .....Doubleday, \$1.50

Three masterpieces of refined and delicate humor. The Cardinal of the first story is one of the best and most lovable priests in English fiction, a genuine creation. Anglo-Italian life is faithfully presented and the descriptions of Italian scenery are chiseled to rare beauty.

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Free Joe and Other Georgian Sketches.Scribner, \$1.00



Gabriel Tolliver .....	Doubleday, \$1.50
Little Union Scout .....	" \$1.25
Mingo .....	Houghton, \$1.25
Nights with Uncle Remus.....	" \$1.50
Uncle Remus .....	Appleton, \$2.00
Uncle Remus and His Friends.....	Houghton, \$1.50

In Uncle Remus, Harris has contributed a great and original figure to American letters as distinctive as that of Cooper's Natty Bumppo. Uncle Remus is a shrewd old negro, the product of plantation days in the South. His mind is a store of wonderful "beast-stories," whose moral he adapts to the character and foibles of his hearers. The hero is Bre'er Rabbit, a veritable Ulysses among the "critters." The "Little Union Scout," an episode from the campaigns of General Forrest, tells the adventures of a Federal scout who turns out to be quite a surprise. The other books are sympathetic studies of the Southern negro.

#### **Harte, Francis Bret:**

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The first is the story of an hereditary curse, the second that of the awakening of a conscience, in which there is a fine tribute to the power and the consolations of the Sacrament of Penance. A rather gloomy Calvinistic theology tinges these works as well as the tales of the two last volumes, but they uphold the great moral law and teach the evil and the consequences of sin.

**Hearn, Lafcadio:**

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A father's quest for his lost daughter and his death from yellow fever just as he is on the point of finding her. A story of Louisiana, with unsurpassed descriptions of a tropical storm and of the sea in its splendors and in its fury. The book is but slightly tinged by the Bohemian author's skepticism and vaporous naturalism.

**Hinkson, Katherine Tynan:**

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Her Father's Daughter..... " \$1.25

Her Ladyship ..... " \$1.25

A Girl of Galway.....Blackie, 5s.

Men and Maids....., " \$1.10

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The Way of a Maid.....Benziger, \$0.85

The writer has a keen insight into certain aspects of Irish life. She is especially skilful in portraying the fortunes and struggles of broken-down aristocratic families. The style is pleasant and chatty, at times full of color. Miss Chenevix and her faithful old servant in "Her Ladyship" are admirably conceived and sketched.

**Howells, William Dean:**

A Hazard of New Fortunes.....Houghton, \$1.50

The Rise of Silas Lapham.....Harper, \$1.50

A Traveler from Altruria..... " \$1.50

The first is the romance of business, the story of a rather coarse but fundamental, manly individual brought into contrast with "society," the second shows us the domestic and business troubles of Mr. and Mrs. March. The "Traveler" is an Utopian novel, in which the Altruist reviews the heartlessness and soulless cruelty of the pampered and selfish classes of society. Howells is at his best in descriptions of New England life and manners. He is the master of what might be called the "reporter

school," he records exactly what he sees, but he does not reach much below the surface. The style is business-like and effective.

**Irving, Washington:**

The Alhambra .....	Crowell, \$1.50
The Conquest of Granada.....	Dutton, \$0.70
Bracebridge Hall .....	Macmillan, \$0.80
A History of New York, by Diedrich Knicker- bocker .....	Putnam, \$1.50
Salmagundi .....	" \$2.50
The Sketch Book .....	Crowell, \$0.75
Tales of a Traveler.....	" \$0.75

The first two volumes, not free from a certain amount of bigotry against the Catholic Church, are partly romance and partly history; they contain picturesque and stirring pages. The author's sympathies seem to be rather with the Moors than the Christians. "Bracebridge Hall" in its pictures of English life recalls Addison. Diedrich Knickerbocker's volume begins as a parody on a pretentious history and is continued in a vein of comedy in which fact and fiction are humorously but inextricably mingled. "Salmagundi" is a delightful hodge-podge of "whim-whams" and odds and ends on the most irrelevant but delightful topics. The "Sketch Book" and the "Tales" contain some of the choicest gems of American letters. A return to the pages of Irving will educate and refine the taste.

**Jackson, Helen M. (Mrs. Hunt)**

Ramona .....	Little, Brown, \$1.50
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The book might be called an apology for the Indian. It was inspired by a noble motive, that of exposing the wrongs and the injustice of the United States Government towards the Red Man. A mission Indian is the hero. The author is fair and sympathetic towards Catholics and recognizes the civilizing influence of the Church and her missionaries. California life and scenery are well drawn.

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